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The Patentees respectfully request reconsideration of the claims by the Examiner since the claims clearly define patentable subject matter.

Claims 1-23 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable of Northeved, of record, in view of Omizo (Japanese Patent Publication 48-30874). In a personal interview with the Examiner on August 26, 1993, agreement was reached that "Northeved [is] inapplicable against base claims as amended insofar as it doesn't pertain to syringe device nor is it bi-directional nor is it evident that blood ingress is permitted."

Each of the claims require that the transducer transmit and receive ultrasonic waves through the sharpened end of a needle. The Northeved reference states that the piezoelectric element at the end of the stylet receives ultrasonic energy while the piezoelectric element in the housing 10 emits ultrasonic energy. Neither the Northeved nor Omizo references teach or make obvious the claimed construction of a stylet being positioned within the inner lumen of a needle and being spaced from the interior of the needle to facilitate backflow of blood when a blood vessel is penetrated with the stylet including an ultrasound transducer supported at its distal end for both transmitting receiving ultrasonic waves through the sharpened end of the needle. In addition, the cited references fail to teach or make obvious a conductor extending through the stylet that is connected with a back surface of the transducer and another conductor on the surface of the stylet connected with a front surface of the transducer. Further, as acknowledged by the Examiner in the personal interview, Northeved does not apply to a syringe device.

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In view of the foregoing, Patentees respectfully submit that the claims are in condition for allowance. If the Examiner has any questions, he is kindly urged to contact the undersigned attorney.

Respectfully submitted,

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Michael B. Stewart

Michael B. Stewart
Registration No. 36,018
DYKEMA GOSSETT PLLC
505 North Woodward Avenue
Suite 3000
Bloomfield Hills, Michigan 48304
(810) 540-0830
Attorney for Applicant

CERTIFICATE OF MAILING

I hereby certify that the enclosed paper is being deposited with the United States Postal Service as Express Mail, "Post Office to Addressee", Mail Label No. EF361310565US, postage prepaid, in an envelope addressed to the Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks, Washington, D.C. 20231, on this 10th day of June, 1994.

Joyce Krumpel

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